

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /089 W

-----231911Z 052801 /44

R 190950Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9060

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0679

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GB

SUBJECT: GABON AND THE COTONOU RAID

1. LOCAL MEDIA REPORTING MARCH 16-17 ON LATEST BPRG ACCUSATIONS AGAINST TOGO NOTED WITH GLEE ERRONEOUS BENINOIS CHARGE THAT EYADEMA HAD VISITED LIBREVILLE JANUARY 2 TO PLOT MERCENARY RAID WITH BONGO.

2. FOR BENEFIT OF THOSE ATTEMPTING CAST LIGHT ON THIS MURKY AFFAIR, SEEMS WORTHWHILE TO NOTE THAT WHILE JANUARY 2 MEETING DATE IS IN FACT WRONG, EYADEMA AND BONGO HAVE MET FREQUENTLY IN RECENT MONTHS AND ALSO SENT HIGH LEVEL EMISSARIES BETWEEN CAPITALS IN LATE DECEMBER. BONGO VISITS TO LOME OCCURRED OCTOBER 21 (FOR TRIPARTITE SESSION WITH HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY AS WELL AS EYADEMA) AND JANUARY 9-14, WHILE TOGOLESE PRESIDENT WAS IN LIBREVTLE OCTOBER 14 (FOR MEETING WITH BONGO AND MOBUTU) AND ON SURPRISE
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VISIT FEBURARY 3-4.

3. COMMENT: IN UNRELATED CONVESATION ABOUT SITUATION IN ZIARE, PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE (AND NEPHEW) JULIEN MPOUHO MADE REVEALING REMARK THAT CLOSE PERSONAL FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN CHEIFS OF STATE SOME TIMES IMPOSE ACTIONS IN THE NAME OF FREINDSHIP THAT ARE NOT REALLY

JUSTIFIED IN TERMS OF NATIONAL INTEREST. WHHILE MPOUHO
MADE NO SPECIFIC REFERNECE TO BENIN SITUATION, REQUEST
TO BONGO BASED ON PERSONAL TIES STILL SEEMS MOST LIEKLY
EXPALANATION FOR ANY GABONESE INVOLVEMENT IN MERCENARY
ATTACK IN LIGHT OF GOGS CLEAR NATIONAL INTEREST IN
KEEPING HANDS OFF. STEIGMAN

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